



# Arizona Department of Agriculture

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## ***MEDIA ADVISORY FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE***

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### **Horse Rescue Under Investigation and May Be A Fraud: No Laws On Arizona Books Governing Horse Rescues/Shelters/Humane Societies**

(Phoenix) -- The Arizona Department of Agriculture is currently investigating a horse rescue in Surprise, Arizona accused of neglecting the very horses they promised to take care of. The same owner/operator in this case also ran the Hoofed Animal Humane Society in Ashfork, Arizona in 2002, was prosecuted by the Arizona Department of Agriculture, found guilty of one count of animal cruelty and is on probation through January of 2006.

The Department has received numerous calls and complaints from around the state regarding animal rescues stealing animals or abusing donation monies. While animal rescues may be operated in a perfectly ethical and legal manner, many are not and usually the person who has sent their horse to the rescue does not realize it until it is too late.

#### **How do I know my horse will be treated well at rescue?**

You don't! The Arizona Department of Agriculture has investigated and prosecuted numerous cases of horse neglect at rescues, as in the example above. Just because the word "rescue" or "humane" appears in the name of the organization does not mean that they will follow through in taking care of the animal.

#### **How do I know the rescue I donate my horse to will stay there or go to a good home?**

You don't! It is your job to do your homework before you donate or sell your animal to a rescue. Oftentimes, the rescue will then re-sell it to the highest bidder. At this point, the original owner has little, if any, legal recourse.

#### **Do the same rescue owners pop up again, under a new name, even after the Arizona Department of Agriculture has shut them down?**

Yes! This happens frequently because these rescues are in the business of making cash. They will often charge the owner of the animal to "take it off their hands" and then turn around and charge the adopting family a fee. The rescue may even take the animal from the adopting family after a certain period of time, but never refund the money to the adopting family. The rescue will then find a new adopting family and take another sum of cash from them. This keeps happening until the Arizona Department of Agriculture goes through the legal process of shutting down the rescue. However, the person operating the shelter may then start a new shelter in a new area of the state under a new name and repeat the entire process.

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